

# Going Green in Gloucestershire

**A second church in the Gloucestershire circuit has achieved the prestigious A Rocha Gold Eco-Church Award for its comprehensive environmental initiatives. This new achievement shows how a supportive circuit can transform how religious institutions champion sustainability within their communities.**

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"I looked at my own life from a lifestyle survey we did as a congregation. When my car insurance came up for renewal, I looked at those that were going to offset my carbon footprint... It's looking at the whole aspect of being a greener person, " shared Fiona, a church member who started implementing green practices after hearing about them in the church.

In the [Bristol Methodist District, Stonehouse Methodist Church](#)'s journey began in 2019 when the church's eco-coordinator, Ginny, reviewed [A Rocha's survey](#). "We were already doing quite a lot, so that was encouraging," she recalls.

The church had been a fairtrade supporter for over two decades and had already implemented green energy solutions, including an air-source heating system.

The transformation touched every aspect of church life. From installing water butts and compost bins to creating wildlife-friendly gardens, the changes were both practical and

visible. "As people walk by and the bus goes by, they can see what we're doing in our garden," Ginny explains.

The church's commitment to environmental stewardship extends beyond its grounds. Monthly community lunches bring together church members and residents, fostering a sense of community while promoting sustainable practices.

The church also serves as a collection point for various recycling initiatives, including pens, jewellery, and ink cartridges, supporting a local eco-shop in Stroud.

One of the most significant challenges in achieving the Gold Award was tracking the church's carbon footprint. "We had to record our carbon footprint for the church over a couple of years," Ginny notes. "By having a new heating system in the hall, we brought our footprint down."







# Green beyond the church walls

The church's influence extends to younger generations through its junior church group, which actively participates in environmental initiatives. Sue recalls a creative recycling activity: "Our minister at the time bought in a load of rubbish, and he said, make a picture out of this. And we ended up doing a lovely beach scene."

Revd Jimmy Cullingford, the current minister, emphasises how the environmental focus has become ingrained in the church's culture: "It's not just about getting the A Rocha Award, the culture has changed. Being green is part of this church."

The transformation has opened new doors for community engagement. The church is now involved in local nature recovery projects and is building relationships with eco-warriors from local schools.

They work in partnership with local and national charities such as the [Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust](#) and the [Arboricultural Association](#), and they are part of the [Stonehouse Community Arboretum](#).

"We care about the world just like you do," adds Jimmy, explaining how environmental stewardship has become a bridge to wider community involvement.



# Towards an ever greener future

Looking ahead, the church has ambitious plans, including planting more trees and creating a wildflower meadow using seeds sourced from the local Wildlife Trust. They are also exploring the possibility of installing solar panels and creating another pond to enhance their ecological impact.

The success of Stonehouse Methodist Church demonstrates how religious institutions can lead by example in addressing environmental challenges. As Ginny concludes: "Everyone was very keen to get involved and has helped us get the Gold Award."

Their achievement goes beyond the physical changes to their property – it represents a fundamental shift in how a congregation can embrace environmental stewardship as part of their spiritual mission.